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ABSTRACT

This instructional packet is one of a series of five modules that emphasize a systematic decision-making model for common problematic situations. The steps of the model are identifying the problem, gathering information, developing and assessing alternatives, implementing a solution, and evaluating and modifying the solution. Aimed at adult basic education (ABE) students, each packet contains the following sections: pretest; objectives; information for the learner, with relevant exercises and worksheets, case studies that students can discuss together; and posttest. In addition, a form for students to evaluate the materials is provided. The packets were designed to be flexible, to stress problem-solving techniques that can be transferred to other situations, and to use community resources. Materials can be used on an individual or group basis, and usually can be used independently with evaluation and reinforcement provided by the teacher. This packet, on child rearing, covers reasons for having children, parenting styles, understanding children's development, potential school crises, positive communication, helping children to behave, punishment, dealing with sex, and substance abuse. (KC)

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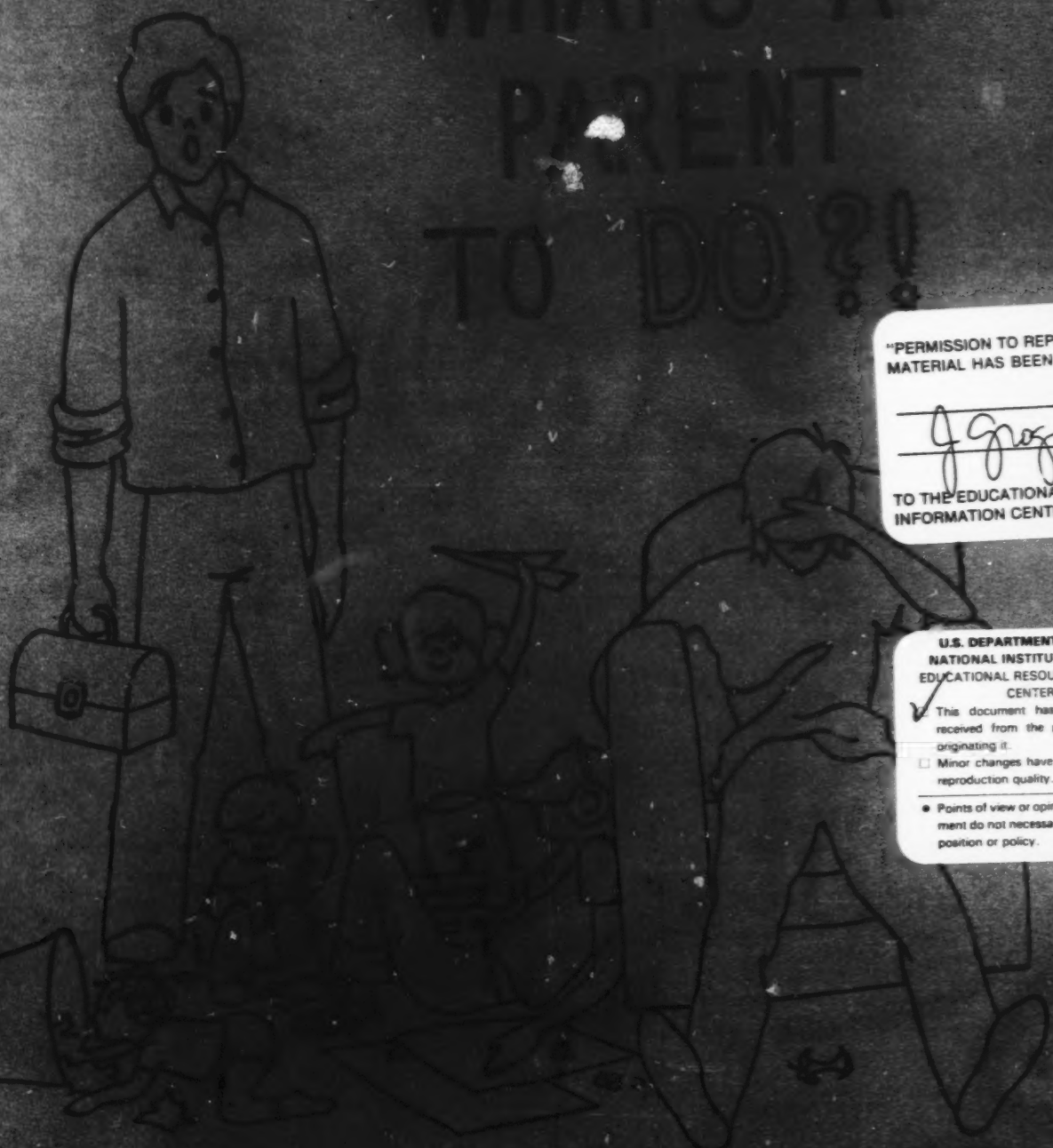
WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?!



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WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?

by

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FOR THE TEACHER

Coping With Crisis for the Adult Learner is a series of five instructional packets which emphasize a systematic decision-making model for common problematic situations. Although the topics vary for each packet, the format and strategies remain constant.

RATIONALE

The rationale for the entire series is that, regardless of the problem, the use of a general problem-solving approach usually yields positive results. This approach can be summarized as follows:

1. **Identify the problem.**
2. **Gather information.**
3. **Develop and assess alternatives.**
4. **Implement a course of action.**
5. **Evaluate the solution and make necessary modifications.**

Many times, individuals involved in Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs may find themselves overwhelmed by personal problems. Without the skills to attack the problems systematically, the person may be at a loss as to how to proceed. As a result, the difficulties remain unsolved. In addition to the personal consequences, there are educational implications as well. Such a person is likely to find it difficult to benefit fully from any education program until progress is made in other areas of his/her life.

FORMAT

Each packet contains the following sections:

1. **Pretest - used to assess prior learning and for evaluation purposes**
2. **Objectives**
3. **Information for the learner - with relevant exercises**
4. **Case Study - Upon completion of the questions it is helpful for students to discuss their responses**
5. **Post test - for evaluation**

These packets were designed to be flexible, to stress problem-solving techniques which can be transferred to other situations, and to utilize community resources. Depending on the situation, the materials can be used on a group or individual basis. A fourth-grade reading level is utilized throughout. For the most part, learners will be able to proceed independently with evaluation and reinforcement provided by the teacher. Numerous opportunities are provided for students to apply what they have learned within a practical context, and teachers can help by encouraging the adult learners to complete all exercises.

STUDENT EVALUATION

We are very interested in how you feel about this book. Please complete the following checklist. There is space at the bottom for your comments. Anything you might want to add can be written there.

	YES	NO
1. The material was interesting.	____	____
2. I learned some new ideas.	____	____
3. The information will be useful in my daily life.	____	____
4. It was easy to read.	____	____
5. The exercises and case study helped me use my new skills.	____	____
6. I was able to do most of the work without help from the teacher.	____	____

The packet stressed a specific way to make decisions. It includes:

1. Identify the problem.
2. Gather information.
3. Think of different solutions and weigh their good and bad points.
4. Make a decision.
5. Decide if your course of action was successful. If not, make changes.

7. I understand this approach to making decisions.	____	____
8. I think it will be useful to me.	____	____
9. I learned more about the community services which are available.	____	____

Comments:

Your Age: _____

Sex: _____

Highest grade you've completed: _____

How many hours did it take you to complete this booklet? _____

FOR THE STUDENT

At some time, almost everyone has problems with their health, children, money, or marriage. You can't avoid such problems entirely, but still you can learn to handle them in a positive way. The series, **Coping With Crisis**, will give you information so you can find answers which meet your needs.

Whenever you have a problem, you need to tackle the issue. You must also admit that physical and emotional stress can happen with it. For example, the stress that starts with a money problem can spill over and cause tension in a marriage. When a parent is ill, children may get upset too! To avoid one problem causing another, it is helpful to have positive ways to cope.

Although it is hard to say the specific problems that a person may have, it is helpful to know general steps which can work in solving just about any issue. These steps are called a **decision-making model.** The specific steps are:

1. **To understand what factors led to the problem.**
2. **To get information.**
3. **To think about different ways of solving the problem and to weigh the good and bad points of each.**
4. **To decide on a course of action.**
5. **To see if the solution worked and make any needed changes.**

Only rarely is one solution a perfect one. Almost any choice will represent a compromise. Often the biggest challenge is selecting the solution which meets your needs and is still fair to other people who may be involved.

HOW TO USE THESE MATERIALS

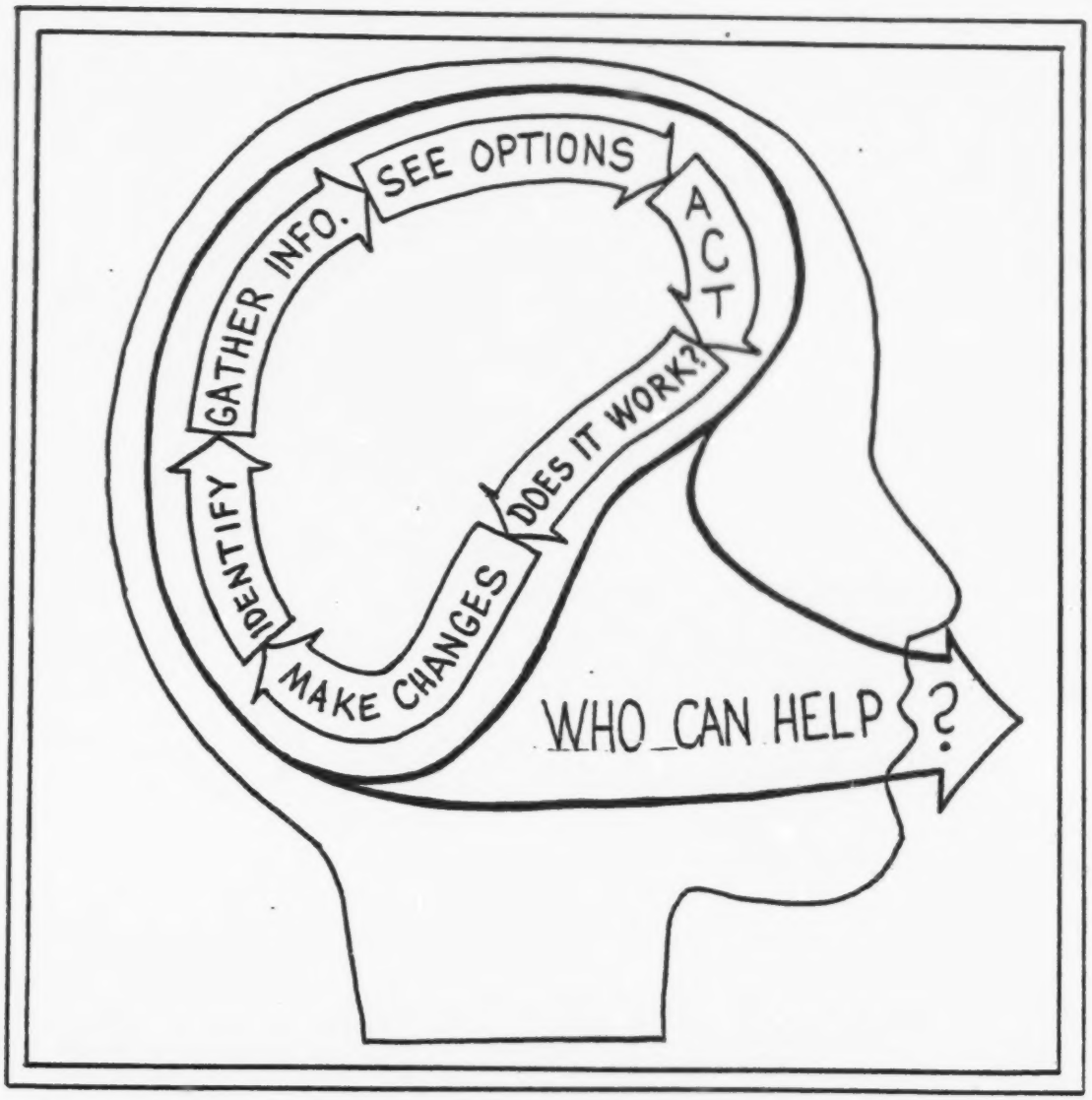
Each booklet starts with a short quiz to help you see what you already know. Your time is valuable, and it does not make much sense to spend too much time on topics you already know.

The quiz is followed by useful information. The more you know about any issue the more likely you are to make a wise choice on how to solve it. This information uses the **decision-making model.** It will help you see how it is used in everyday cases. There are also some short exercises. These will help you to try out your new problem-solving skills. They will also help you find help in your own area that you can use when a problem occurs. Using such resources can help you bring expert advice to a problem. It doesn't mean that you've failed when you seek such help. It does show you we want the very best solution possible. You are also smart enough to know where to get such aid.

Next there is a Case Study which allows you to use all your skills in a real-life situation. In many instances, there are no "right" answers to case study questions. Therefore it can be worth-

while for persons working on the same packet to discuss their answers with each other.

Finally you will find another brief quiz. It will help your teacher learn if the packets were useful to you. The most important thing to remember is that your final goal should not be only to do well on the quiz. Your success really will be clear when you can tackle everyday problems in a calm and effective way. In a sense then, your daily life is your real final exam.



WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?

NOTE TO THE TEACHER: Please detach this sheet before giving the packet to a student.

OBJECTIVES:

STUDENTS WILL:

1. Recognize the responsibilities of parenthood.
2. Identify common problems in raising children.
3. Develop positive techniques for interacting with children.
4. Identify sources of assistance when dealing with problems associated with parenting.

PRE-TEST NAME _____

WHAT' A PARENT TO DO?

1. How familiar are you with the over-all challenges of parenting?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

2. Children need help in understanding their own feelings and motivations when dealing with sex. How familiar are you with the idea that providing children with information about sex and birth control does not mean that they are being encouraged to become sexually active?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

3. How familiar are you with the concepts of positive messages and effective communications with your children?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

4. How familiar are you with the concept that children are unique individuals with unique characteristics of personal and physical development?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

5. How familiar are you with the fact that parenting is a skill one must learn; it is not something that is instinctual or done automatically?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

6. How familiar are you with the characteristics a person must have to be an effective parent?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

7. How familiar are you with the idea that a positive role model on the part of parents is an effective tool in helping children to deal with drugs and alcohol?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

8. How familiar are you with the concepts of effective and reasonable discipline in child rearing?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

9. How familiar are you with the concept of early stimulation and its importance in a child's growth and development?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

10. How familiar are you with the idea that child development is fairly predictable, that certain behaviors and skills can be expected at certain stages of life?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

11. How familiar are you with the fact that bringing a child into a marriage will not strengthen a bad relationship?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO ?

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

Deciding to become a parent is one of the most serious roles an adult can take on. The rewards can also be great. You can share your love with a child. You serve as a guide to help the child become a responsible adult. Being a parent also leads you to learn new things about yourself. It all adds up to make parenting a special experience.

However being a parent is not right for everyone. We know that not everyone should be a secretary or a welder. It is also wrong to think everyone is able to be an effective parent. Being a good parent makes many demands on us. We know children cost money to raise. We also need fairly good health to care for them. On a personal level, parents need to be mature and patient. Often they must be unselfish. Parents also need insight into their own feelings and actions.

It also requires a true idea as to what is involved in parenting. For example, having a child will not help a bad marriage. It only complicates the problem. Nor does becoming a parent have anything to do with proving how masculine or feminine you are. Having a baby so that you'll have someone to love and someone who will love you can also cause disappointment. For many years, children require hard work, sacrifice, and patience. It is a long time before they are able to return love. Even then there are no guarantees. Worksheet I allows you to think about common reasons why people become parents and to review your ideas on this subject.

WORKSHEET I

CHOOSING TO BECOME A PARENT

The following are common reasons people give for becoming parents. In each case, say whether you consider the person's expectations to be REALISTIC or UNREALISTIC and give brief reasons for your answer.

1. "I want someone to be around to take care of me in my old age."

2. "If I get pregnant, I'm sure he'll marry me."

3. "We already have one child and I'd like to have another so she won't be lonely. Besides only children grow up to be selfish."

4. "We've been married three years, and it seems pretty stable. We really feel we want to share our love with a child."

5. "I want to have a son to carry on the family name."

6. "I think if I didn't have a child, I would miss a really important experience."

7. "Our parents keep saying that they want to be grandparents."

Even under the best conditions, there are many challenges which face parents. We know today that we are not born knowing how to be good parents. Rather it is a skill that we need to learn. Much of it is learned from the example set by our own parents. It is important to look at the role models which were set by our parents when they raised us. Many of their parenting skills were probably good. Then we would want to follow their example. However in other cases, we may be able to see ways we might do better.

Worksheet 2 helps you look at the role models set by your parents and to review your views on parenting. Since parenting is a skill, it demands both knowledge and practice. This packet will provide you with information on common challenges which face parents.

WORKSHEET 2

PARENTING STYLE

In the space below are common problems faced by parents. In each instance, briefly describe:

1. How your parents handled the issue
2. Whether you would continue to use the same approach with your children
3. Your reasons for your decision

ISSUE	YOUR PARENTS' APPROACH	WOULD YOU FOLLOW THEIR EXAMPLE?	YOUR REASONS
ATTITUDE TOWARD SCHOOL AND GETTING AN EDUCATION			
TEACHING KIDS HOW TO HANDLE MONEY			
PREPARING KIDS FOR ADULT RE-SPONSIBILITIES AND THE WORLD OF WORK			
TEACHING KIDS ABOUT SEX			
TACTIC USED FOR DISCIPLINE WHEN YOU MIS-BEHAVED			

UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

GATHERING INFORMATION

All children go through stages of development which we can predict. For example, crawling generally precedes being able to pull yourself up and hold onto objects. This in turn must be mastered before you can walk. It is beyond the scope of this packet to detail all the stages of development which children go through. Your public library will have many books on this subject if you are interested.

However it is important that you know these stages for many reasons. First of all, it saves you from expecting a child to do something for which they're not ready. For example, it is unfair to punish a baby for a sloppy eating habits. They simply lack the skills to eat in a tidy manner. Likewise it is expected that at some time young children will challenge their parents and talk back to them. Such behavior does not mean that the child is "bad." Rather it does show that the child is starting to assert his/her independence. This is healthy. It is also a way for the child to test what limits the parents will enforce.

When you do think about your child's development, there are some things to keep in mind. For instance, the age that a child begins to walk is usually one year. This does not mean there is something wrong with a baby who is not walking on his/her first birthday. Rather the developmental charts give us "averages" for mastering skills. Varying a few months one way or another is still considered "normal." It is also important for parents to avoid the trap of comparing children. Each child is unique. It is unwise to put pressure on yourself or the child to follow some rigid schedule. This is why it is helpful to have a child seen on a regular basis by a doctor so their development can be checked.

Finally it is important that you be aware of patterns of child development so if problems do come up, you would get help quickly. Think again about our example of a child learning to walk. It would be a cause for concern if a child were still not walking at the age of two. Or if a child were three and still didn't talk, it would be important to look into it. However if a parent does not know about normal development, they might not see a problem in its early stages.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

However what can be done if you suspect a problem? Some parents want to deny that a problem exists even if there is strong evidence that it does. In reality, the sooner help is sought the more likely the problem can be solved. Therefore if you are mildly concerned there might be a delay in your child's physical, intellectual, emotional, or social development, it is important to check it out quickly.

Where can you go for help? A good place to start is your pediatrician or family doctor. Hopefully the child's development will be within normal range then you can relax. However if the doctor does feel that there is a problem, she/he will tell you what can be done. In any case, it is important to follow the doctor's recommendations.

YOUR CHILD AND SCHOOL

GATHERING INFORMATION

A good education is vital to your child's future success in life. Helping your child do well in school demands attention long before they even start kindergarten. To be successful, education must be a partnership between parents and teachers.

A lot of what children learn actually happens in their preschool years. Parents can do a great deal to foster their child's mental skills during this time. This is often called providing a "stimulating environment." It does not mean that kids need lots of expensive toys. The suggestions which follow will give you ideas on how to provide this stimulation for your child:

1. Talk to your child often. Encourage them to talk to you. Even babies need this. For example, in the supermarket, point out the names of various products as you shop. Dressing a child is a good time to teach colors.

2. Sing to your child. Most kids like music and they don't care if your voice is off-key.

WHO NEEDS OPERA?

3. Read books to your child. It helps them to love books even before they can read. It also provides a good "quiet time" before bed. It gives the child a chance to wind down. It also offers a nice sense of sharing something special between parent and child.

4. Answer children's questions whenever possible. Constant questions from kids can

sometimes be annoying. However it shows the child has a healthy curiosity and is developing normally. It is important to encourage that desire to learn.

5. Provide children with safe objects to play with. This doesn't mean the latest, most expensive toys. It does mean basic toys such as blocks and crayons. Even items like pots and pans and a wooden spoon will amuse many children.

6. Encourage your child to feel good about him/herself. When they do something well, praise them. If they make mistakes, avoid making fun of them. If you do, children may be afraid to try new learning situations.

7. Acquaint your child with the community. Visit a zoo if one is available. Take them to Story Time at the public library. Many YMCA'S and other youth centers have classes available even for preschoolers at a low cost.

Once a child starts school , it is important not to turn over total responsibility for your child's learning to the teachers. You still have a vital role to play in their education. The following suggestions will help you build on the important work you started during the preschool years:

1. Say good things about school. Even if you have unpleasant memories of your school years, don't burden your child with your negative feelings.

2. Set aside a regular time and place each day for your child to study. Children don't learn good study habits by themselves. When children do bring work home from school, find something positive to say about it. Even if it's not perfect, you can say "I'm really proud that you're trying hard." If your child doesn't mention what's happening in school, ask questions. It shows your interest and that you value education.

3. Stay in close touch with your child's teachers. Take advantage of Open House and parent conferences to get to know the teachers. If you have any concerns, you have every right to call the teacher yourself.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Many children have problems with school at one time or another. The main thing a parent can do is to take action quickly - don't delay. School problems rarely correct themselves. They just get worse.

Your first step is to talk to your child and learn how she/he sees the issue. At this point, try and stay open-minded. Your child probably isn't lying, but she/he is so close to the problem it may be hard for them to give a truly clear picture of what is happening.

Your second step is to talk to the teacher(s). A good teacher should be able to outline the problem to you. Then they should suggest steps that you both can take to help. If you do not feel good about the teacher's suggestions, don't give up. See the principal, counselor, or school psychologist.

Most schools have services which can be used to help children. They include remedial programs, speech therapy, special education programs, testing, and counseling. If you feel your child might need such services, don't hesitate to ask for them. Community agencies may also have tutoring sessions. Since they often use volunteer tutors, services may be free-of-charge. Worksheet 3 will help you plan steps to use if your child should have problems with school.

WORKSHEET 3

POTENTIAL SCHOOL CRISIS

Below are common problems faced by children in school. In each case, briefly describe a good way to deal with the situation. Share your answers with another student and ask for their comments.

1. Your first-grader comes home and says "My teacher doesen't like me. She's always picking on me."

2. Your third-grader's report card shows a failing grade in reading.

3. Your seventh-grader is suspended for skipping school.

4. Your child in tenth grade must make a decision as to which curriculum to follow - college prep, business, vocational, or general. She/he seems completely undecided as to what to do.

KEEPING THE COMMUNICATION LINES OPEN

GATHERING INFORMATION

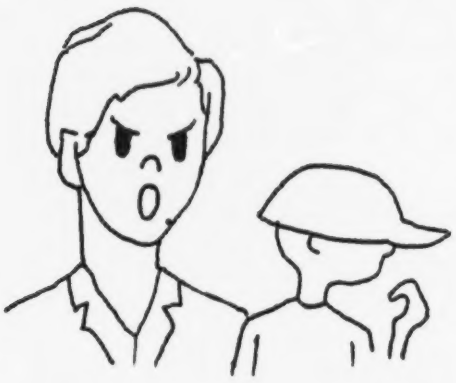
Parents and children often have to go through many hurdles together as the children strive to become independent. A major factor in reaching that goal is the ability of parents and kids to communicate well.

Some parents spend alot of time talking "at" their children but little time talking "with" them. Parents do have maturity and experience on their side. However this does not mean that children have nothing worthwhile to say. Some parents seem amazed when serious problems arise with their children. In many cases, these problems could have been avoided if the children had felt free to be open with their parents and if the parents had listened carefully to what was said.

Children learn the skills of communication the same way they learn many other things. It is by modeling their actions after the example set by the people around them. When we communicate, there are two important parties. They are the sender and the receiver of the message. Therefore parents must be conscious of the example they set in both of these roles.

A good sender of a message tailors what they have to say to the needs of their audience. To parents this means being aware of stating your message in a way that it can be understood by the child. A common mistake parents make is to "talk down" to their kids even after the child is older.

A good communicator is also able to help the listener understand the reasons behind what they say. For example, barking commands at a child does not set a good role model. Instead it is helpful to explain briefly <u>why</u> the restrictions are needed. Some parents resent this as they feel they should not have to explain themselves to a child. However a child must learn why rules are necessary. Then they can start and take responsibility for their own actions.



. NOBODY LISTENS TO A

BROKEN RECORD

Good communicators also make their listeners feel good about themselves. If someone feels she/he is being attacked or put down, it is normal to get angry or withdraw. This is true of children and their relations with their parents. It is better to avoid negative statements as much as possible. When you must correct a child, stress the behaviors you want to change. Don't put down the child. There is a big difference in how a child would react to the following messages:

"Go and clean up your room now. Put things in their proper place so you'll be able to find them when you want to play tomorrow."

versus

"Why do you have to be such a slob? Your room looks like a pigpen."

Worksheet 4 will help you practice developing positive statements to use with children.

WORKSHEET 4

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION

In the space below are short descriptions of common situations encountered by parents. For each case, develop brief but positive messages for your child. Consider their age and level of understanding in developing your answer.

1. Telling a 4-year -old to pick up his/her toys.

2. Preparing a child for his/her first dentist appointment.

3. Explaining your rules regarding curfew to a teenager.

4. Consoling a 5-year-old who comes in crying from outside and says "None of the kids will play with me."

5. Responding to a 15-year-old who no longer wants to attend church services with the family.

6. You overhear your child make fun of another child who is physically or mentally handicapped. Both kids are 9.

Besides sending positive messages, effective communication depends on listening skills. You want to be able to exchange information and understand another's viewpoint. Young children seem to talk alot sometimes. Parents might begin to "tune out" their constant chatter. This can be a mistake for two reasons. First children may begin to feel their parents don't think they're worth listening to. When the time comes that the child needs to talk about important matters with the parents, the child may have given up even trying to get them to listen. Secondly if we get out of the habit of listening to our children, we may not know about important things they're trying to share. Many times we approach topics we really care about by making a casual remark. Children often do the same thing.

There are two simple things parents can do to listen effectively to their children. The first is to restate back to the child what you feel their message to be. Saying "Do you mean that ....." and then stating what you think the child is trying to say will help to insure that you understand the child.

The second step is to show your interest in what the child is saying by asking questions. It is important to phrase such questions in a non-threatening way so the child doesn't see it as prying. Carefully phrased questions can do alot to improve communications between you and your child. For example if your child tells you about a bad day at school, you might ask "How do you feel about what happened?" "What do you think you could do so it doesn't happen again?" Such questions can lead to a good exchange of ideas.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Even in the best of families, there are times when communication breaks down. You may feel that you and your child are talking "at" each other without really communicating. Or it may seem as if all communications have come to an end. Then professional counseling can often help to get things back on track.

Asking for outside help is not an admission of failure. Rather it is a sign that you care about your child, and you want the very best relationship possible. If you need referrals for counseling, check with school guidance staff, your doctor, or clergyperson. Another resource is the Yellow and/or Blue Pages in your phone book. Many such services have a sliding fee schedule if funds are limited.

HELPING YOUR CHILD TO BEHAVE

GATHERING INFORMATION

Many parents view discipline as getting their children to behave in a certain way in a given situation. The real goal of effective discipline is much broader than this. It is to help children develop a strong sense of self-discipline. Then they will behave properly even without the threat of punishment. "Discipline" does not mean the same thing as "punishment." Instead discipline is really concerned with guiding a child toward behavior which is good for him or her and which is consistent with the rights of other people.

Effective discipline has several qualities. They are:

1. It is based on realistic expectations.
2. It is fair.
3. It stresses the positive as much as possible.
4. It is consistent.

Realistic expectations require a knowledge of normal growth patterns. For example, most young babies go through a stage of putting objects in their mouths. It is their way of checking out the world around them. It would be both unfair and useless to correct them for such actions. Instead a good approach would be to be sure that all objects within a child's reach are safe.

Fair discipline is related to realistic expectations. It also means that there is a sound reason for the behavior you expect from the child. Many children demand "Why do I have to do it." Sometimes you may want to reply "Because I told you to do it." Children need to understand the reasons behind your rules if they are to develop self-control. They cannot go through life behaving well only if another person is there to tell them what to do. Once a child reaches an age when they begin to understand words, they should be given reasons for the behavior expected of them.

Some parents only respond to their child's behavior when it is wrong and they need to correct them. Most children have a strong desire to please their parents. It makes discipline easier if you make the most of this natural trait. This requires from parents an awareness of good behavior and a willingness to praise it. Consider the following examples of rewarding good behavior.

"Thanks for calling when you were going to be late. It kept

me from worrying."

"You did a nice job of cleaning up your room."

"You really did well in the school play. I'm very proud of you."

All children need attention. If they can't succeed in getting it for good actions, many will resort to misbehaving just to get some type of response from their parents. It is easier for both parents and kids if the emphasis is on good rather than bad behavior.

Consistent discipline involves two factors. First it means that what you want from the child stay the same over a period of time. For example, correcting a child for talking back to you one day and then ignoring that same behavior two days later leads to confusion. A week from now the child may figure she/he has a 50/50 chance of getting away with it. Teaching a child to play the odds when it comes to their behavior is not likely to lead to a strong sense of self-discipline.

The second part of consistent discipline is the role model set by the parents. It is unfair to a child to say "Do as I say, not as I do." Children do a great deal of learning by imitating the people in their own family. Consequently if you want your child to be polite, use good manners, eat their vegetables, not smoke, or whatever, it is important that you serve as a good role model.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

If you follow the tips in the previous section, the need to take serious action shouldn't arise too often. However all children at times act on impulse. They will also test the limits set by their parents. At such a time, it is important that the child learn a basic lesson. It is that negative actions generally have negative results. This can be done by not yelling but instead designing a punishment which fits the "crime."

Suppose you allow a child to play outside after school, she/he comes in late when you call them for dinner. It might be enough to give a stern warning the first time. If it occurs again, a natural reaction would be not to allow the child to play outside the next day. Or if you see your child behaving recklessly on his/her bike, it would be logical to take away the use of the bike for several days. In any case, it is important in correcting the child to stress the behavior and not to physically or verbally attack the child. Worksheet 5 will help you think about good discipline methods for common misbehavior in children.

WORKSHEET 5

MAKING THE PUNISHMENT FIT THE "CRIME"

Below are examples of misbehavior in children. For each case, describe a positive way to correct the child.

1. A teenager comes in 45 minutes late from a date.

2. Your 2-year-old doesn't want to go to bed.

3. Your 10-year-old has repeatedly left his bike outside in the rain and it is beginning to rust.

4. When you refuse to buy your 3-year-old candy while you're grocery shopping together, she/he begins to cry and scream.

5. You told your teenager to clean his room yesterday, and it's still not done.

6. You refuse to let your 5-year-old go to the neighborhood store by herself because of a busy intersection. She starts to yell "You always treat me like a baby. I hate you."

Sometimes parents get overwhelmed. They do not know of alternative ways to correct a child. They respond to a child's misbehavior by physically punishing the child. This approach may seem to work for a short time. If we look at physical punishment, we can see it has no long term positive results.

Physical punishment only teaches children that their parents view hitting someone as the way to solve a problem. There is also a danger that parents may become overwhelmed with their anger. Then physical punishment may grow into physical abuse.

Each year, millions of children are victims of child abuse. Besides the physical pain they suffer, the victims also suffer life-long emotional scars. It is for this reason that persons who were abused as children often grow up to be abusive parents.

Regardless of what a child does, there are always several ways of handling it. Physical abuse can never be justified. If you sometimes think you go too far in punishing your kids or if you feel tempted you might hurt them when you are very angry, confidential help is available. Check your phone directory under Parents Anonymous. Help really is just a phone call away.

DEALING WITH SEX

GATHERING INFORMATION

Some adults are surprised to learn that we don't wait until the teen years to become sexual beings. Even babies and young children explore their sex organs and can find it feels good. This is a normal part of growing up. Once a child learns to talk, they will begin to ask questions about sex just as they ask questions about anything else.

At this stage, the best action a parent can take is to convey a good attitude toward sex. Not making a child feel bad for exploring his/her body and using the correct terms for the sex organs are two good first steps. Once a child begins to ask questions, they should be answered honestly and with the attitude that sex is a positive aspect of our being human. If you are uncomfortable answering such questions, any public library should have books available for free loan. Some are meant as advice for parents. Others are meant to be read jointly by parents and their kids.

As children get older, they need to be prepared for the physical changes which are a

part of puberty. This need for information is equally true for both boys and girls. Providing such information early also helps to keep the communication lines open between parents and kids. It also helps to insure that children are learning the facts correctly and gaining an understanding of the values of their parents.

Children today experience a wide variety of sexual pressures from both their friends and the media. Pretending that children are unaware of sex simply because you never discuss it with them is unwise. The high rates of teenage pregnancies and of veneral disease require that teens know the facts of reproduction. They also need to know the responsibilities involved. Factual knowledge is rarely enough. Threatening lectures are even less successful.

Children need to understand their feelings when dealing with sex. If children are to become sexually well-adjusted adults, they need to accept their sexual desires as healthy. But they also need to know they don't have to be pressured into sexual activity before they are ready. For this reason, parents need to discuss the pressures that teenagers encounter. Then teens need help in developing ways to cope within the framework of their value systems. Too many young people are driven to early sexual activity for the wrong reasons. They may be curious or give into peer pressure. They may desire to prove they are grown-up. They may want to prove their masculinity or femininity. They might believe that sexual involvement is a way to gain love.

It is impossible to deal with all these issues in a one-time speech on the facts of life. Thus we need on-going communication with children. In other sections, we have stressed the need to encourage kids to feel good about themselves. This is also important when dealing with sexuality. No child should feel compelled to gain acceptance or feel loved by engaging in sexual activities for which they are not ready.

In the end, teenagers will make their own decisions. Thus they need to know the facts about birth control and the risks and treatment of veneral disease. They need to know where help is available which is free and confidential. Many communities have family planning clinics or chapters of Planned Parenthood where quality medical care and birth control services can be obtained. Likewise they need to know they can contact their local office of the Pa. Department of Health to learn how to obtain confidential treatment for V.D. if they suspect they may have it. Providing young people with such information does not mean parents want their children to be sexually active. It does mean they are giving their kids the information necessary to make decisions and to behave as responsible adults.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

You may feel uncomfortable discussing sex with your child. Many parent organizations at schools and church groups have workshops for parents to help them provide positive sex education to their children. If your community doesn't seem to offer such programs, suggest them to the leaders of your PTO or church group. Be assured that many other parents are equally uncomfortable and would welcome such help.

What can you do if you suspect or know that your child is sexually active? Tears, threats, and punishment won't solve the basic problem. Sex is an emotionally-charged subject for many people. It really is difficult to be objective when sex and your child are the issues. Professional counseling can help to reopen communication between you and your child. Your family doctor and/or clergyperson should be able to provide a good referral.

Finally if your teenager becomes involved in an unplanned pregnancy, again counseling can prove to be helpful. Whatever decision is made, it can have lifelong effects on everyone involved. A check of the Yellow Pages under "Pregnancy Counseling Services" should provide you with aid.

DEALING WITH DRUGS

GATHERING INFORMATION

At one time or another, almost every child will face a decision on whether or not to try drugs. How your child responds will depend on many factors, some of which are set at a young age.

The reasons young people use drugs vary greatly. Some are peer pressure; low self-esteem; a desire to escape pressures at home, school, and with friends; and curiosity. Children themselves will be the ones who make the final decision. Still there is a great deal parents can do to provide support and guidance.

The first step may be difficult. However we must admit that even grade-school children have the chance to experiment with drugs. Therefore drug education must begin at an early age. Many schools are doing a fine job in this area. Neverthless it must be reinforced at home.

For the most part, we know today that scare tactics don't keep young people from us-

ing drugs. Instead there are three factors which should be considered when talking to your children about this subject.

The first is that kids need facts. They need to know about different kinds of drugs, their effects, and their potential for being addictive. Secondly children need to know why drugs may seem attractive to them at some times. Discussing peer pressures, stress at school and home, feelings of rebelliousness, and curiosity, all help children to understand their own feelings. Finally young people need to develop good ways to cope with the pressures of modern life. Many parents find it helpful to have "What if" talks with their children. For example, ask a question such as "What if you were at a party and most of your friends were smoking marijuana. When you refuse, they make fun of you." Allow the child to work through how she/he might handle this. Then offer your own suggestions. This helps to prepare kids in advance for situations they are likely to encounter.

Another step parents can use to discourage children from using drugs is to set a good role model. When we talk about drugs which are likely to be abused, we are also talking about alcohol. If children grow up watching their parents reach for a drink or a pill when they're facing a problem, it's going to be hard to discourage young people from doing the same thing.

Finally parents can help their kids avoid drug abuse by helping young people to feel good about themselves. Kids need to feel worthwhile. They need to be praised for what they do well. They need to have goals to work toward. Children need to be encouraged to take part in a variety of hobbies and activities. Overall if kids feel good about themselves, they are less like to need a "high" from drugs.

DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Sometimes despite the love and support of a good family, children still become involved in drug use. Many parents are unaware of the early warning signals. Others want to deny that a problem exists because they fear it will reflect badly on them. However if there ever was a time to take action quickly, this would be it.

Some signs that a child may be using drugs are:

1. A sudden change in school performance.
2. A new group of friends.
3. A change in sleeping habits - either an increase or decrease.

4. A withdrawal from former activities - hobbies, sports clubs, etc.
5. Money missing from home or an unexplained absence of the child's possessions. (Some children might sell their bike, stereo, etc. to get money for drugs.)
6. Changes in eating habits.
7. Mood changes - either irritability, withdrawal, restlessness, etc.
8. Red, blood-shot eyes.

If you suspect your child may be involved with drugs, there are a variety of community support services to help you and your child. Problems relating to drugs are usually quite complex as you must deal with both the physical and psychological effects. This is a time for assistance from trained professionals. Worksheet 6 will aid you in locating such services.

WORHSHEET 6

CHILDREN AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Part I Think about pressures young people are likely to encounter in growing up (making friends, school, dating, deciding what to do with their future, stress at home, etc). Make up five "What if" questions you might raise in a discussion with your child. After each question, list at least 2 positive coping strategies you might suggest to your child.

Part II Use the Yellow and/or Blue pages of your phone directory. Look under "Alcohol, alcoholism" and "Drug Abuse." List all the agencies and phone numbers which are listed.

DECIDING ON A COURSE OF ACTION

Regardless of the problem you encounter with a child (and every parent does have some), the solution you choose will depend on many things. These include your understanding of the situation, the needs of the child, the resources available, and your attitude regarding parenting.

It is also important that whatever course of action that is decided upon is supported by both parents. Nothing can doom a solution to failure more quickly than inconsistency between parents. Many children are clever at seeing a lack of unity in the position of their parents. They can play one parent against another. In order to avoid being manipulated by a child, parents must discuss and agree on a course of action.

EVALUATING YOUR SOLUTION

Obviously few problems can be solved immediately. Effective parenting is an on-going process which needs to be improved over time. Thus periodically it is necessary for parents to stop and check whether the course of action they're using is working. If it is not, it is important to change your plan. Admitting that you need to make changes is not an admission of failure. Rather

it says that you are flexible and recognize that good parenting is a life-long learning process. If you are stumped and cannot decide on a course of action, seeking outside aid from the resources mentioned in this packet can be of great help. In any case, your children are too valuable to simply give up on finding a solution.

Being a parent can be richly rewarding. It is also very demanding. It is not a role in which everyone can succeed. Those who are successful have an understanding of the responsibilities involved. They make a commitment to learn as much as possible about good parenting practices. Then in turn, they translate that knowledge into effective action. Since it is our decision to bring a child into the world, do our children deserve any less than the best we can offer them?

CASE STUDY

WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?

Being an effective parent demands more than love. A person must consider maturity, financial security, patience, unselfishness, reasonably good health, and personal insight in making a decision to raise a family. It is important that we understand our own experiences as we grew up to better help our own children to develop and grow.

There are many problems that both the child as well as his parents will face from childhood through his teenage years.

Parenting is a full time job and we need all the help we can get. Your neighbor is experiencing some problems with her teenage daughter. She tells you about her relationships with boys and her fear about drugs. Her daughter is a good girl who baby-sits for you on occasions so you are concerned. What help can you offer to your friend to recognize problems as well as to find solutions?

The next page has some questions based on this Case Study. They will help you to see how well you have improved your problem-solving skills.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. State in your own words what are the major problems in the case study.

2. What kinds of information would you need to know to plan a course of action?

3. What resources in your community might help in solving this problem?

4. List as many possible solutions as you can.

5. Which solution would you recommend? Why?

6. Any one solution is rarely perfect. What problems might arise with the solution you chose?

7. How would you decide if your solution worked well?

8. If your first approach didn't work out, how might you improve it?

Post-Test Name _____

WHAT'S A PARENT TO DO?

1. How familiar are you with the characteristics a person must have to be an effective parent?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

2. How familiar are you with the fact that bringing a child into a marriage will not strengthen a bad relationship?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

3. How familiar are you with the fact that parenting is a skill one must learn; it is not something that is instinctual or done automatically?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

4. How familiar are you with the idea that child development is fairly predictable, that certain behaviors and skills can be expected at certain stages of life?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

5. How familiar are you with the concept that children are unique individuals with unique characteristics of personal and physical development?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

6. How familiar are you with the concept of early stimulation and its importance in a child's growth and development?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

7. How familiar are you with the concepts of positive messages and effective communications with your children?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

8. How familiar are you with the concepts of effective and reasonable discipline in child rearing?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

9. Children need help in understanding their own feelings and motivations when dealing with sex. How familiar are you with the idea that providing children with information about sex and birth control does not mean that they are being encouraged to become sexually active.

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

10. How familiar are you with the idea that a positive role model on the part of parents is an effective tool in helping children to deal with drugs and alcohol?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3

11. How familiar are you with the overall general knowledge contained in this packet?

Not Familiar At All	Somewhat Familiar	Familiar	Very Familiar
0	1	2	3